

NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS

[Last spring "The Spirit of Missions" contained an article by Archdeacon Stuek, of Alaska, describing an incident in the life of a missionary nurse, Miss Woods, of Fort Yukon. We reproduce it here, in part, for the vivid picture it gives of such work as our far-away nurses are called upon to undertake. From the same magazine we take some other items of interest.—Ed.]

"WHEN I last wrote I had pitched my tent at the Chandalar village, sixty-five miles north of Fort Yukon, and was ministering as best I could to the diphtheria patients, while Mr. Knapp took the team and went back to get Miss Woods. For the five days following I swabbed out throats two or three times a day, cooked beef tea and milk and rice, took temperatures, and did my best for the two poor creatures who were suffering so severely, and I held divine service every night.

I knew that five days was the least time in which Miss Woods could possibly come. It would take two days each way, and at least a day to get things together. I knew it might easily take longer, and I hardly expected her on Christmas Eve—when the five days were up—but she came. She lived up to her reputation. She dropped her school, she dropped her Christmas, she gathered her supplies and her medicines, she took a couple of natives and another team, and she came when I sent for her. I shall never forget that prompt, cheerful response. I shall never forget how she "bobbed up serenely" from that toboggan after her thirty-five miles' ride through the bitter cold, and took general charge in her placid, undemonstrative way. It lifted a load off my heart when I saw her crawl out from under the robes and throw back the hood of her fur *parkee*, in front of my tent, with a Christmas greeting upon her lips.

The next day we made a hospital of the cabin in which we had installed Miss Woods (its owner had moved with his family, into a tent, despite the weather) and we moved the two patients from the large cabin inhabited by many people in which they had lain, and left them with Miss Woods.

* * * * *

St. Stephen's Day was devoted to the fumigation of the large cabin where the sick had been. We turned everyone out—about a dozen persons lived there—we made them leave their outer garments and we hung them, together with all bedding, on lines across and across the room; we stopped all chinks with cotton, and then we burned sulphur all day long; and the next day Mr. Knapp and I left. We offered to stay with

Miss Woods and take her back to Fort Yukon when the sickness was over, but she would not hear of it. 'You have done your work here,' she said, 'your winter journey is yet before you; now leave me to do my work.' She was not in the least afraid to be left with these Indians, sixty-five miles from the nearest white person, to make her journey back when the need for her was passed. Her school called her; the deferred Christmas festivities of her Fort Yukon people called her; but she would stay as long as her presence was required and would then travel back.

And here I would like to stop awhile and pronounce my eulogy upon our women in Alaska. Miss Woods is not alone; she has been called upon to make greater sacrifices and more striking effort, once and again, than the others have, but we have others who would respond quite as promptly, quite as gladly, did the call come to them.

The Alaskan mission is blessed in having such women, and all well-wishers of the work here will pray God to put it into the hearts of others like them to offer themselves.

It is a glorious work; a Christ-like work; a simple work of going about doing good. It calls for patience and fortitude, but it has great consolations, great compensations. And it is a happy life, with all its discomforts and sacrifices.

Miss Woods 'is up to her eyes' at Fort Yukon all the time; school, mission, sick people, housekeeping; the two little scamps she has taken to look after, the troubles and difficulties of all the families she has to help bear; and now they talk of making her post-mistress, because the office is likely to fall vacant, and all the other white people are Canadians or otherwise ineligible. And they must keep a post-office at Fort Yukon. But, despite her manifold occupations, or perhaps because of them, she is always happy."

"Nine-tenths or more of the people who go to Alaska go with the hope and expectation of some financial gain. It is difficult for them to understand any motive other than the hope of 'striking it rich' as sufficient to send people to Alaska and keep them there.

'I suppose,' said one of the residents to Deaconess Carter, who has rendered such excellent service as superintendent of St. Matthew's Hospital, 'that you people at the hospital have good jobs.' 'Yes,' replied the deaconess, 'it is a pretty good job.' 'How much do you get out of it?' was the next inquiry. The record fails to state what happened to the questioner when told that a deaconess' or a nurse's stipend in Alaska is \$500 a year. And that in a land where a carpenter's wages average about \$15 a day! Deaconess Carter is obliged to pay a cook

in the hospital an amount equal to that received by two nurses, and a man to do the chores receives a like amount."

* * * * *

ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL, TOKYO, JAPAN

"These patient, happy, little Christian Japanese nurses, flitting about in their short white frocks, from morning till night, and through the nights too, always with a cheerful smile, ready to do anything, never saying, 'I am tired,' these stole my heart, and I wished something might be done to insure their comfort and pleasure in their hours of rest.

This is not my first experience in a hospital in Japan, but my first in a Christian hospital, and it made me realize keenly the wide difference between the two, and that here in Japan, where there are many hospitals, a Christian hospital has a unique place.

The rooms for the nurses are on the ground floor and are such as are found in the very ordinary Japanese dwellings. The straw mats which cover the floor are only raised about a foot from the ground. No matter how cold or how damp the weather may be these mats are their seats and their beds. It may be said: 'But they are accustomed to these conditions.' Yes, they are, but that does not conduce to health or prolong their precious lives. When about their duties they must of necessity be absolutely quiet. When they retire to their rooms for an hour's freedom from duty, they must still be quiet, there can be no relaxation into pleasant chat even, which is so dear to the Japanese, because these rooms are just under the rooms of the patients. Everything is so crowded!"

